

**Finding Aid to the
Maria Toomey Research Files on
Sheyenne National Grasslands**

Toomey, Maria

Research files on Sheyenne National Grasslands, 1935-2001

.5 linear ft.

Collection number: Mss 338

Tapes 564-568

[Biography](#)

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OVERVIEW

Access: The collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Institute.

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BIOGRAPHY

Maria Enerson Toomey, originally of Ambrose, later Enderlin, N.D. and then Fargo, was a North Dakota State University student who in 2002 researched the establishment and environmental history of the Sheyenne National Grasslands, ultimately writing two papers on the subject, one of which was featured in the 2000-2002 McNair Scholars Research Journal. Maria married Michael Toomey after graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree in history with a minor in business administration. Maria Toomey went on to receive a Master's degree in counseling at Minnesota State University Moorhead. She was doing outreach

counseling work in Enderlin and Lisbon until moving to Fargo and becoming a stay-at-home mom to two daughters.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Maria Toomey Research Files on the Sheyenne National Grasslands consist of the two papers written by Toomey, one as a participant in the McNair Research Scholar Program and the other for the History Dept. senior seminar class. The collection also contains a wealth of accompanying research files compiled by Maria Toomey. The research material comes from a variety of sources, most notably several local North Dakota newspapers documenting the struggle for determining grassland usage, audio recordings of interviews with Sheyenne Valley residents, and official federal and state statements on the matter.

The [Papers Series](#) consists of two student papers written by Toomey while a student at North Dakota State University. The first paper, which appeared in the McNair Research Scholars Journal, bears the title “Sheyenne National Grasslands: An Environmentalists’ History”. The second paper bears no title, but analyzes the relationship between farmers, ranchers, administration, and the land in the Sheyenne National Grasslands.

The [Research Files Series](#) consist of seven subseries: Newspapers, Periodicals, Interviews, Federal Publications, State Publications, North Dakota State University Publications, and Other Publications.

The [Newspaper Subseries](#) consists of several local newspapers that contain articles pertaining to the plight and evolution of the Sheyenne Grasslands. The [Periodical Subseries](#) consists of journals and magazines, both regional and national, relating to the debated land usage of the Sheyenne Grasslands. The [Interviews Subseries](#) consists of oral interviews with Sheyenne Valley residents and others interested in the land usage of the Sheyenne National Grasslands including John R. Challey, Jorgen, James, and Jerrel Haugen, Joe Milton Jr. and Larry Woodbury, Gordon Solhjem, and Tom Spiekermeier, in addition to the notes that Toomey took on them. All interviews were conducted in 2001-2002. Cassette tape recordings of the interviews are available in the Institute Tape Collection, numbers 564 through 568.

The [Federal Publications Subseries](#) consists of documents published by the United States federal government on the history of the Sheyenne Grasslands, documentation on Roadless Area Conservation practices, and information put out by the Environmental Protection Agency on the Sheyenne Grasslands land usage. The [State Publications Subseries](#) consists of documents published by the State of North Dakota on the land usage and ownership of the Sheyenne Grasslands, mostly by means of the North Dakota State Planning Board and its various committees. The [North Dakota State University Publications Subseries](#) consists of H.L. Walster’s General Soil Areas of North Dakota and publications by the Dickinson Research Extension on Great Plains grass pasture management. The [Other Publications Subseries](#) consists of a Grassland Economic Study by Tony Dean, publications by SARE Animal Production North Central Region and the Sheyenne Valley Grazing Association, a written history of the Sheyenne Valley during the 1930s, a 1944 speech by Usher L. Burdick on the effort by North Dakotan farmers for a fair market, and a copy of a 1960 letter about the importance of the wilderness to David Pesonen by Wallace Stegner.

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

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| 1/3 | Untitled paper on relationship between farmers, ranchers, administration, and land in Sheyenne Grasslands |

Research Files Series

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| 1/5 | <i>The Fairmount News</i> , April 4, 1935 - October 17, 1935 |
| 1/6 | <i>Fargo Forum and Daily Republican</i> , October 28, 1935 – November 1, 1935 |
| 1/7 | <i>Grand Forks Herald</i> , July 2, 1999 |
| 1/8 | <i>Hankinson News</i> , February 28, 1935 – October, 1935 |
| 1/9 | <i>High Country News</i> , June 5, 2000 |
| 1/10 | <i>Lisbon Free Press</i> , February 22, 1934 – December 3, 1936 |
| 1/11 | <i>The Sheldon Progress</i> , January 18, 1934 – December 16, 1937 |
| 1/12 | <i>The Wyndmere Herald</i> , March 28, 1935 – January 9, 1936 |

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1/28 National Grasslands Management – A Primer
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State of North Dakota Publications Subseries

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Other Publications Subseries

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Usher L. Burdick, 1944
1/46 *Wilderness Letter*, Wallace Stegner, 1960